

**SB 796 Year-Round hunting, including Sundays,  
Dorchester County  
Position: OPPOSED**

Over the last 20 years, hunters have lobbied to increase the number of days on which they can hunt, until there remained only a few Sundays left – after 10:30 am, that is. Now hunters want it all.

I am one of the 400 plus members of the non-profit, Tuckahoe Equestrian Center, located in Caroline County, with an active youth group, the Hoof Picks. Many of our members love riding at Idylwild WMA in Dorchester – in fact, we organize a Valentine's ride there every February. It is one of the diminishing number of places that horseback riders can enjoy a "real" trail ride, that is, one that is more than a few miles in length.

Many horse owners do not have horse trailers and rely on a network of private trails that traverse their farms on which to ride. Others may have trailers but need a place to ride, and public areas that can accommodate horses are few. Whether on private land or in a park, Sunday is the only day to be certain that there isn't a hunter on the other side of a property's borderline.

And accidents definitely do occur – and with greater frequency than are reported in DNR's hunting accident reports. A man was shot in the legs in Tuckahoe State Park in 2014 during turkey season. In 2016 an 87 year old man was struck in the head by a bullet while walking in his backyard which adjoined Patuxant River Park. These incidents were reported in local news outlets but were not included in DNR reports.

Brenda Kibler, a retired DNR officer, was quoted in the Feb. 14, 2021 issue of the Star Democrat: “DNR was often short-staffed, and hunting accidents were common – there were constant hunting complaints – it was ridiculous – and Sunday is a hard day to enforce because officers need days off, too.”

How many more accidents would there be if the perception of danger didn't keep many Marylanders out of the woods – **even when they own the woods** -- like my husband and I do?

Thank you so much for your kind attention.

Joyce C. Bell  
Talbot County  
wbell2@washcoll.edu